



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INSURANCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JANUARY 23, 2006

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NEW REVISIONS TO THE STATE'S SMOKE ALARM LAW

Nashville, TN.- The Tennessee State Fire Marshal's Office would like to clarify recent revisions to the state's smoke alarm laws.

Prior to January 1, 2006, one and two-family dwellings and one and two-family rental units were required to have at least one smoke alarm that was audible in every sleeping area installed in the unit/dwelling. Changes to the law became effective January 1, 2006 and updated the installation requirements of these occupancies to the standards of the 2003 International Residential Code.

For new construction, smoke alarms must be installed in each sleeping room, outside each sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms, and on each additional story of the building including basements. They are not required in crawl spaces or in uninhabitable attics. All smoke alarms must be interconnected so that an alarm in one area activates all alarms throughout the dwelling. Additionally, all alarms must be hardwired to the building's electrical system and have battery backup power.

For existing buildings with alterations, repairs, and additions that require a permit, or when one or more sleeping rooms are added or created, smoke alarms must be installed per the requirements of new construction. Smoke alarms are not required to be hard wired or interconnected where the alteration does not remove the interior finish exposing the structure of an area, unless there is an attic, crawl space, or basement available which could provide access for hard wiring and interconnection without the removal of interior finishes. No additional alarms need to be installed where repairs are made only to the exterior surface of the dwelling.

"Unfortunately, Tennessee is a leader in fire related deaths and we want to make sure that the public is aware of these changes," said State Fire Marshal, Paula A. Flowers. "We have had several calls into the department and want to make sure that correct information was given to the public."

For more information, please visit www.state.tn.us/commerce/sfm

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